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DOC Graduates New Correctional Officers

DEFOREST, Wis. - The Wisconsin Department of Corrections strengthened its correctional officer corps last Friday, May 22 after graduating 86 officers.

The graduation ceremony took place at Deforest High School where DOC Secretary Ed Wall and Michael Meisner, Warden of Redgranite Correctional Institution, addressed the new DOC staff.

Secretary Wall said, "We have one single asset more valuable than anything else and that is the people that work for us. Without them there is no mission, there is no success, there is no public safety, there is no hope for those in society that want to change for the better and are taken into our care." Wall emphasized these men and women have traded the pursuit of fame and fortune "for the satisfaction of helping their fellow man."

Meisner also addressed the graduates: "You will have endless possibilities to make a difference each day." Meisner stressed how people change once someone believes in them and provides a new opportunity. He concluded, "Treat people well, with respect, be fair, and be consistent and you will do well in your new career."

Graduate Richard Perez, who served in both the Marines and Army, will work as a Correctional Officer at Stanley Correctional Institution. Perez emphasized his desire to have a positive influence on people. On his contribution to society, Perez said, "I did it for the nation and now I'm on a state level."

Justin Barton, who will be a Correctional Officer at Columbia Correctional Institution in Portage, said he was inspired by his father's work at Jackson Correctional Institution. He hopes his duties as a Correctional Officer will have a positive impact on the world around him every day.

Scott Barton, father of Justin Barton, is the Program Director at Jackson Correctional Institution. Scott Barton has worked for the DOC for five years, after serving the city of Eau Claire as a police officer for the previous fifteen years. On Justin's and his own work for the DOC, Scott Barton said, "This is a chance to make a difference for the guys that are inside the institution to see if we can lower the recidivism rates. The inmates aren't really bad people, they just made bad choices."

From the graduating class, 21 will become officers at Columbia Correctional Institution, nine at Oshkosh Correctional Institution, eight at Green Bay Correctional Institution, eight at Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility, eight at Stanley Correctional Institution, five at Jackson Correctional Institution, five at Taycheedah Correctional Institution, four at Fox Lake Correctional

Institution, four at Racine Correctional Institution, three at Dodge Correctional Institution, three at Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility, three at Waupun Correctional Institution, three at Wisconsin Secure Program Facility, one at Redgranite Correctional Institution, and one at St. Croix Correctional Center.